

HALE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Hale Parish Council Meeting held at 7.00 pm on Tuesday 4 December 2018 in Hale Village Hall, Hale

Present:

Cllr Lucas – Chairman, Cllrs Aitken-Sykes, Hartas, Gemmell, Mangan, Templeton

In attendance:

Miss K Cleary – Clerk

Mr S Whitmarsh – Tree Warden

23 members of the public

1. **To receive apologies for absence** – none. Cllr Lucas welcomed Cllr Gemmell to his first meeting. It was noted that Cllr Gemmell had signed the acceptance of office prior to the meeting.
2. **To receive any Declarations of Interest** – Declarations of interest in respect of Item 8 were made as recorded in Appendix 1 of these minutes. No other Declarations of Interest were made. In response to a Councillor enquiry, Clerk clarified that these declarations were being read in full whilst a Parishioner concern was considered. Clerk had met the concerned parishioner with the Chairman and now had a full understanding of the concern. Clerk to report progress at next meeting.
3. **To consider and approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 6 Nov 2018** – Minutes having been circulated in advance were approved and signed by the Chairman.

Matters arising from the minutes

- 3.1. Clerk had not received any response from Neighbourhood Watch coordinator – to chase
- 3.2. Clerk hours to be discussed at a closed session of the Council in January.
- 3.3. Steve Avery had agreed the 'pylon planning notes' taken by the Clerk at the September meeting – Clerk to upload to website
4. **Members of the public are invited to address the council on agenda matters and to raise any matters not otherwise on the agenda.**
 - 4.1. A parishioner requested that HPC seek specific guidance from the relevant planning authorities for Hale what the criteria would be for residents to successfully provide a "granny annexe" in their own property and whether there would be any limitations to usage. Clerk to action.
 - 4.2. A parishioner on behalf of the Parish Plan project team apologised to the Council that the project team were a little behind the original schedule but hoped to have a draft ready for review at the next Parish Council meeting. Noted.
 - 4.3. A parishioner on behalf of the Protect Hale Purlieu Movement advised the Council that PHPM believes that the National Grid proposals are unlawful in respect of some specifically protected species and habitats.
 - 4.4. A parishioner requested clarification of the focus and intention of the proposed Vexatious Complainant policy in item 12 of the agenda, given that the Council already had a formal complaints procedure.
 - 4.5. A parishioner on behalf of the Protect Hale Purlieu Movement requested the Parish Council support the PHPM in a legal challenge to the use of IROPI in respect of the National Grid VIP project.
5. **To consider tree works applications CONS/18/1192 (Ferne Hornet) and CONS/18/1112 (Copse Cottage)**
 - 5.1. The Tree warden reported that he had a declarable interest in Case ref CONS/18/1192 – Ferne Hornet. He had been on holiday and not had a chance since his return to visit Copse Cottage (CONS/18/1112).

- 5.2. It was proposed by Cllr Lucas and seconded by Cllr Mangan and therefore **RESOLVED**: that HPC accept the decision reached by the National Park Authority's officers under their delegated powers. All agreed.

6. To receive a report of matters of interest from the North West Quadrant meeting held 3 December 2016

Cllr Hartas reported:

- 6.1. NFDC and HARAHA gave a joint presentation on Affordable Housing showing the large % of forest households with total annual income below £30K. Clerk to post slides on HPC website.
- 6.2. Cycling events were discussed; NFDC should advise of routes with reasonable notice. Clerk to approach neighbouring clerks to see if we can arrange a joint letter.

7. To determine next steps in relation to the National Grid Visual Impact Project including correspondence received

- 7.1 Having regard for Chapter 33 (the local code for councillors and officers dealing with planning matters), Councillors agreed that they could not support any legal challenge presented by any lobby group as in doing so they would forego their right to vote on the matter if a planning application is received. Clerk to respond formally to PHPM.
- 7.2 PHPM to provide information to support their assertion that the current National Grid proposals are unlawful in respect of in respect of some specifically protected species and habitats.
- 7.3 Clerk confirmed that letter had been sent to National Grid in respect of tunnelling option. No response had yet been received.
- 7.4 Cllr Hartas reported that she and Cllr Lucas had presented the tunnelling request at the Verderers court, which in turn was reported in the Lymington Times. Although the paper had erroneously reported HPC as 'campaigners opposing plans', it was deemed not necessary to write to the paper to demand a correction.
- 7.5 Cllr Lucas reported that the next meeting of the VIP Stakeholder Reference Group was to be held on 13th December; Cllr Hartas to attend on behalf of HPC as Cllr Lucas is on holiday. HPC notes will be published on HPC website as soon as possible thereafter.

8. To determine next steps in relation to Affordable Housing including correspondence received. (Cllrs Templeton and Aitken-Sykes moved to the public area for the duration of this item)

- 8.1. Cllr Lucas reported that following the CPRE affordable housing conference, Tim Davies of NFDC had offered a meeting with the HPC and other local Parish Councils on Affordable Housing matters. It was proposed by Cllr Lucas and seconded by Cllr Mangan and therefore **RESOLVED**: that Woodgreen, Hyde, Godshill, Bramshaw, Breamore, Whitsbury, Redlynch and Rockbourne Parish Councils be invited to attend. Cllr Lucas to coordinate meeting, ideally in January.
- 8.2. A Parishioner had written to the Council challenging whether the Housing Needs survey had actually identified a need for affordable housing in the village and whether the level of response was sufficient to support the statement that affordable housing was 'supported by most residents.' There was a discussion about whether 'need' had been properly defined within the survey. It was noted that there remained dissent in the village but also noted that further work by the Council and/ or HCG could provide further clarification. Clerk clarified that under agreed standing orders, decisions could not be revisited within six months.
- 8.3. There was a discussion about the meeting of Councillors held on 23rd July (referred to in the letter received from Parishioner). Clerk clarified that there was no formal definition of 'a Parish Council meeting' and that there were no rules to prevent Councillors meeting to discuss issues although decisions may not be made outside of a formal meeting. No decisions were taken on 23rd July, there had been no breach of any rules.

- 8.4. There was a further discussion about whether the resolution passed at the August meeting that 'the HARA report and the Parish Housing Needs survey clearly demonstrated that there was a need for a level of affordable housing within Hale Parish' was done so legally. It was noted that decision had already been taken in July meeting (and minuted as such) albeit without a formal resolution, proposer and seconder. The August resolution was intended to correct this procedural oversight in July.
- 9. To receive an update on the Hatchet Green Regeneration project and determine the next steps for the permanent car park repairs including funding applications update**
- 9.1. Cllr Hartas reported that Earlcote had been booked for week commencing 8th April 2019 to carry out drainage works as previously quoted at £6,756+VAT. If the National Lottery funding application is successful then then additional drainage will be procured. The Village Hall and School had been informed of the planned works.
- 9.2. Cllr Hartas reported that funding applications had been submitted to Cllr Heron's discretionary fund and the National Lottery. Responses were awaited.
- 10. To review the draft Parish Council budget and precept request for 2019/20**
- 10.1. There was a line-by-line review of 2018/19 expenditure and potential budget items for 2019/20. Clerk to update budget pack and recirculate for review at January meeting.
- 11. To receive the Clerk's report including consideration of a revised e-communication protocol and consideration of a draft vexatious complainant policy.**
- 11.1. E-communication protocol: Clerk requested that e-communication protocol wording be amended so that all emails sent by Councillors on council business must be copied to the Clerk. This was to make it easier to respond to any future Freedom of Information requests.
- 11.2. Vexatious Complainant policy: Clerk clarified in response to Parishioner enquiry that this was a separate policy to the existing complaints procedure, designed to be used in extreme circumstances to help protect Council resources from repeat complainants. There was a general discussion whether the policy was necessary, democratic and proportionate in current circulated form. Councillors to submit proposed amendments to the Clerk ahead of the January meeting where the policy will be reconsidered.
- 11.3. Cemetery – Susan Witt has confirmed that 500 snowdrop bulbs were planted 1st/2nd December. There had been an extremely poor response to the request for additional volunteers to help. The tree for the central bed has not yet arrived.
- 12. Correspondence – other than dealt with in relevant sections above**
- 12.1. 6 Nov; A Parishioner re Election candidate statements – noted
- 12.2. 9 Nov; Parishioner complaining about the new noticeboard placed on their wall at Woodfalls Cross. The noticeboard has already been removed. Cllr Mangan to discuss with Mark Noble about putting it up in the bus shelter.
- 12.3. 13 Nov; NFNPA ref independent review of AONB – noted
- 12.4. 16 Nov; a Parishioner complaining about the condition of the cemetery. Clerk to send written response. Budget for 2019/20 to include new noticeboard and consideration to be given to additional budget for works to paths and edges etc.
- 12.5. 21 Nov; dates of Hants Police Woodgreen beat surgeries – noted. Clerk to put on website.
- 12.6. 21 Nov; Verderers notice of result of uncontested election – noted.
- 12.7. 27 Nov; Hants Countryside Access Ranger: RE: Rights of Way Vegetation Priority cutting lists 2019 – Cllr Gemmell to coordinate response from HPC by deadline of 1st Feb 2019.
- 13. To consider and approve the following payments:**
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| 04.12.18 | Cutting Edge (cemetery maintenance Nov 18) | £ 110.00 |
| 04.12.18 | Clerks Expenses (noticeboard) | £ 123.12 |
| 24.12.18 | Clerks Salary | £ 330.17 |

It was proposed by Cllr Lucas and seconded by Cllr Hartas and therefore **RESOLVED**: that the payments be approved. All agreed.

14. To approve the accounts for Nov 2018 and to record the bank balances – approved.

Treasurers Account	£14,361.23
Savings Account	£ 6,315.14

15. Any other business

15.1. Cllr Lucas noted that 'school run parents' were using the byway to the left hand side of the hall. Whilst this is legal, it is undesirable as it increases vehicle traffic on an unmaintained road and also caused significant obstruction to residents Mr & Mrs Sykes. Cllr Lucas had notified school travel team. Cllr Lucas to follow up.

15.2. It was noted that there was work ongoing to the telegraph poles along Forest Rd, possibly a communication upgrade? Cllr Mangan to make enquiries of this and the potential extension of BT Wholesale fibre cabling to cabinets beyond the current cabinet at Woodfalls.

15.3. Cllr Templeton in his role as a director of Hale CLT advised the Council that there had been a directors meeting of the CLT on 5th December and that progress was being made for both a full members' meeting and a CLT meeting that would be open to the public. Noted.

16. To note the date of the next meeting is Tuesday 8th January 2019 at 7.30pm at Hale Village Hall

There being no further business to discuss, the Meeting closed at 10.07pm

Signed:
Chairman

Date: 8 January 2019

Clerk: Miss Kathy Cleary, 5 Saddlers Close, Fordingbridge, SP6 1AE
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Appendix A

ITEM 2: AFFORDABLE HOUSING DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Lucas

Neither my husband nor I are members of the CLT. We will not be receiving any remuneration from the CLT. We do not intend to donate or sell land to the CLT. Neither we, nor any member of our family, will be applying to own/occupy any affordable housing that may be built. I have no interest to declare.

Councillor Hartas

Neither my husband nor I are members of the CLT. We will not be receiving any remuneration from the CLT. We do not intend to donate or sell land to the CLT. Neither we, nor any member of our family, will be applying to own/occupy any affordable housing that may be built. I have no interest to declare.

Councillor Mangan

Neither my wife nor I are members of the CLT. We will not be receiving any remuneration from the CLT. We do not intend to donate or sell land to the CLT. Neither we, nor any member of our family, will be applying to own/occupy any affordable housing that may be built. I have no interest to declare.

Councillor Aitken-Sykes

My wife and I are members and Directors of the CLT. We will not be receiving any remuneration directly or indirectly from the CLT. We do not intend to donate or sell land to the CLT. Neither we, nor any member of our family, will be applying to own/occupy any affordable housing that may be built. I have a perceived bias interest to declare.

Councillor Templeton

I have a pecuniary interest in any item relating to affordable housing on the agenda of any Parish Council meeting. My wife Brenda and I are members and Directors of the Hale Village Community Land Trust Limited. We are willing to transfer the plot of land on our paddock to the CLT at the price of £1.00 conditional on planning permission being granted for the use of the land as a site for affordable housing. Neither we nor my firm, Dixon & Templeton LLP will be taking any payment or benefit whatsoever from the CLT for any work carried out on its behalf as our involvement is for the sole benefit of the village of Hale and its community. Furthermore, neither Brenda nor I nor any member of our family has any intention of applying for an affordable dwelling in the event that any are built in the village.

Councillor Gemmell

I am not a member of the CLT. My wife has applied to join the CLT but no response has been received to her application. Neither my wife nor I are members of the CLT. We will not be receiving any remuneration from the CLT. We do not intend to donate or sell land to the CLT. Neither we, nor any member of our family, will be applying to own/occupy any affordable housing that may be built.

I declare that I have no controlling interest in any issues currently affecting the village of Hale which require the deliberations of Hale Parish Council.

I declare an opinion on the Visual Impact Pylon Project in as much as I have a pylon to the southern aspect of my garden which is visible from my property and any work required to remove it would entail noise and disruption to myself and my family. That interest is situational and I have no pecuniary interest in the project and I can confirm there have been no offers of compensation, compulsory purchase orders or discussions on easement since a site survey in March.

I am widely known to currently oppose the project. That is not on account of the situation I have just alluded to but my belief that the entire project is a profligate waste of a considerable sum of money and that it will entail disruption and inconvenience to Parishioners and Commoners livestock as well as threaten a fragile ecosystem. My opinion is my own and I am not a signatory to the Protect Hale

Purlieu movement. I do not consider my view on the matter to be fixed because as more information comes to light, I am happy to review the situation. I therefore believe I am not biased.

It is widely known that I have an issue with the Hale Village Community Land Trust. My opposition is and always has been to the establishment of the CLT without the involvement of the Community and the fact that two Councillors sit on its Board of Directors. It is widely known that the ONLY land definitely under consideration is Cllr Templeton's paddock on Hale Purlieu, which is adjacent to my own property. Once again, I am in a circumstantial conflict over which I have no controlling influence, however until a planning application is submitted, any conflict of interest is notional.

I wish to make it abundantly clear - I do NOT have a negative view of affordable housing, nor do I object to the provision of additional affordable housing *per se* provided the process of measuring the support of the village is transparent, the actions of the CLT and its Officers are on a level playing field and the whole project has the widespread support of the community. With regard to the Housing Needs Survey, as the structure of the CLT was not identified, alternative sites undisclosed, housing need not defined, the hierarchy of need the village considers supporting not canvassed, the origin of the numerical conclusion in the HARAH report undisclosed and the leaking of interim data whilst the survey was still running, I have long held the view that the Housing Needs Survey was a wasted opportunity to learn what is truly needed and what the village feels comfortable supporting. To push on regardless because 77% of the returns were supportive in principle when very little information was available is a travesty and I am concerned regarding the speed with which this has progressed in recent months when only about 5% of the village are members of the CLT.

To that end, some may consider I have a perceived bias yet that is of relevance only to the CLT as currently constituted and not to the affordable housing issue. Should the composition of the CLT change, its rules be amended, the membership become larger and more inclusive and the errors of the Housing Needs Survey be addressed (which could only be achieved through another survey), then I would be perfectly happy to review my position on the matter and even reverse my opposition to the scheme. However, as things currently stand, I could not support the release of additional government grants to this CLT for the development of the proposed site or sites.

I do not consider this to be a conflict of interest. I am not biased against affordable housing and I am perfectly happy to debate the issues relating to it. My position is one of advocacy to ensure that whatever the result, it is achieved with impartiality and the fullest support of the community.